

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 02212 141517Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 2212

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, UR
SUBJECT: MOSCOW DISSIDENT JEWS' "DISCUSSION" WITH CENTRAL
COMMITTEE, FEBRUARY 16

1. MOSCOW JEWISH DISSIDENT SOURCES HAVE TOLD US THAT A COMMITTEE OF 25 OF THE MOST IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF MOSCOW'S DISSIDENT JEWISH COMMUNITY WILL GATHER IN FRONT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE HEADQUARTERS ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16 AT 10:00 A.M. THE COMMITTEE HAS INFORMED THE CPSU CC OF ITS INTENTIONS AND HOPES TO BE RECEIVED BY A CC OFFICIAL TO DISCUSS THE EMIGRATION OF SOVIET JEWS TO ISRAEL, PARTICULARLY THE PROBLEM OF OBSTACLES PLACED IN THE WAY OF SOVIET JEWS DESIRING TO EMIGRATE. THEY FEEL THE PRE-CONGRESS PERIOD IS A GOOD MOMENT FOR SUCH A DISCUSSION.

2. OUR SOURCES TELL US THAT THEY HAVE TWO MAIN REASONS FOR STAGING THE MEETING. FIRST, THEY DO NOT TOTALLY EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT A FAIRLY SENIOR CENTRAL COMMITTEE OFFICIAL MIGHT RECEIVE THEM, AND THEY WOULD WELCOME THIS AS THE FIRST DIRECT CONTACT BETWEEN THE DISSIDENTS AND THE CC. THEY APPRECIATE THAT SUCH A DISCUSSION WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT POLICY CHANGES.

3. SECOND, HOWEVER, SINCE THE COMMITTEE DOUBTS IT WILL IN FACT BE RECEIVED (AND INDEED IT EXPECTS THAT ITS MEMBERS

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 02212 141517Z

WILL BE ARRESTED IN FRONT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE), IT

IS INTERESTED IN GENERATING FAVORABLE PUBLICITY ABROAD. OUR SOURCES INTEND TO INFORM WESTERN PRESS CORPS IN ADVANCE OF THIS PROPOSED MEETING, PROBABLY FEBRUARY 13, AND HOPE TO SECURE THE ATTENDANCE OF SEVERAL CORRESPONDENTS. THEY ASSUME THAT WESTERN INTEREST IN THE SOVIET UNION WILL BE PARTICULARLY HIGH IN THE IMMEDIATE PRE-CONGRESS PERIOD, AND TELL US THAT THEY EXPECT TO GET QUITE GOOD PUBLICITY, IF THEY ARE INDEED HAULED AWAY TO THE POLICE STATION.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH OUR SOURCES STATE THAT THEY WOULD PREFER A SERIOUS, ORDERLY MEETING IN CENTRAL COMMITTEE HEADQUARTERS TO A CONFRONTATION, WE DOUBT THAT THIS IS IN FACT THE CASE. WHILE IT WOULD CERTAINLY BE A USEFUL PRECEDENT TO ESTABLISH A CHANNEL DIRECTLY TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE HIERARCHY, WE AGREE WITH OUR JEWISH SOURCES THAT THE CHANCES FOR A MEETING ARE UNLIKELY. IN THAT EVENT, THE PRESENCE OF THE WESTERN NEWSMEN AT CENTRAL COMMITTEE HEADQUARTERS WILL PROBABLY RESULT IN PRECISELY THE PUBLICITY FOR WHICH OUR SOURCES ARE HOPING.

STOESSEL

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